



November 2003

SCHOOL FINANCE UPDATE

A Monthly Newsletter Published by the School Finance Division

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Linda McCulloch, State Superintendent

This monthly newsletter is emailed to school districts, county superintendents, county treasurers, and auditors. The newsletter is intended to reach all district staff involved in budgeting, accounting, enrollment, special education funding, and federal programs. Please forward this information to all interested parties. Got suggestions for items to include here? We'd love to hear from you!

Maintenance Of Effort "Check-Up" This Month

By December 1, OPI will email notices to each district concerning the status of maintenance of effort (MOE) for Title I and other Title programs, IDEA Part B and Preschool, and possible special ed funding reversions. This process requires your immediate attention to correct any FY2002-03 Trustees' Financial Summary (TFS) reporting errors that might have caused MOE or reversion problems.

*Need More Info
About Maintenance
of Effort (MOE)?*

*Look for Appendix C and
D in the OPI Grants Hand-
book!*

Deadline for corrections is December 20, 2003, so prompt action is very important. For more info, contact Jim Oberembt at 444-1257 or joberembt@state.mt.us.

Technology Funds

On November 20, Governor Martz announced the distribution of \$1.75 million in funding for district technology programs. The new money for schools comes from the original \$73 million the federal government sent to Montana as part of federal tax cut legislation.

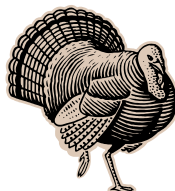
These funds will be distributed to schools along with the December BASE aid payment

and must be deposited in the Technology Fund (28) using revenue account 4650 – Miscellaneous Federal Grants/Revenue from OPI and expenditure program 465. Districts may not transfer these funds to another fund for expenditure. The Technology fund is a budgeted fund so districts that intend to spend more in FY2004 than the amount currently budgeted for that fund will need to adopt a budget amendment. Alternatively, the additional funds may be held in reserve and budgeted for expenditure in FY2005 or beyond.

The funds are being distributed to districts under the provisions of MCA sections 20-9-533 and 20-9-534 and can be used for the purchase, rental, repair, maintenance, and depreciation of technological equipment including computers and computer network access, and for associated technical training for school district personnel. A spreadsheet showing the amount of each district's payment is posted on the OPI web site at

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/TechFund.pdf>.

For more info, contact Bonnie Maze at bmaze@state.mt.us or 444-3249, or Nancy Hall at nhall@state.mt.us or 444-9852.



Questions or comments about this newsletter?

Contact Joan Anderson at (406) 444-1960 or
janderson@state.mt.us.

MASBO New Clerks' Workshop Held

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) held a 2-day training session for new (and almost new) clerks. The session, held in Helena on November 13 and 14, drew about 40 Clerks, County Superintendents, County Treasurers, and other staff. MASBO representatives, including Betty Brumwell (Dutton K-12), Kathy Preeshl (K-G), Gracie Green (Roundup), and Gary Craft (Jefferson HS) were presenters. Discussions covered numerous basic and advanced topics -- payroll, elections, paying the bills, and reconciling the accounts, to name a few.

Another session is tentatively planned for April 2004. MASBO will announce registration later this winter.

Entitlements for FY05		
	Elem	High School
Basic	\$ 19,859	\$220,646
Per-ANB	\$ 4.031	\$ 5.371

Excel Spreadsheets Coming in December

OPI plans to post Excel spreadsheets for FY05 general fund budget estimates during December. We will send a message by official OPI mail when the spreadsheets are posted.

State School Block Grants and Combined Block Grants Distributed

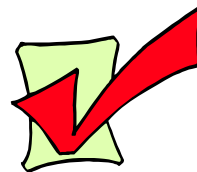
OPI will distribute 70% of the FY 2003-04 School Block Grants (HB124) and Combined Block Grants (SB424) to school districts in November. Payments are deposited in funds according to the FY 2003-04 Final Budgets. The remaining 30% will be distributed in May 2004. The revenue code is 3444

for School Block Grant deposits and 3445 for Combined Block Grants. Block Grant money is not restricted to a particular purpose. Coops do not receive the School Block Grants.

Also in November, OPI will distribute the County Retirement (HB124) Block Grants. Counties receive 50% in this payment and will receive the remainder in May 2004. For more info, contact Bonnie Maze at (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us.

2004 Elections Calendar—Ready!

The calendar for the May 4, 2004 trustee and general fund election has been updated and is posted at the following website:

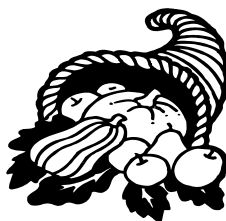


<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/2004ElectionCal.pdf>.

Need more information about elections? Contact Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

Impact Aid Workshop Planned

OPI will host an Impact Aid workshop in Lewistown at the Yogo Inn on Thursday, December 18 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Kerry Wingell of the U.S. Dept of Education, Impact Aid Program, will be the guest speaker and will cover an overview of the Impact Aid Program laws and information about completing the 2004 Impact Aid Application. For more information, contact Tal Redpath at (406) 444-3024 or redpath@state.mt.us.



Link to GASB 34 Spreadsheet

The Association of School Business Officials International (ASBO) recently awarded the group's prestigious Pinnacle

Award to Gregory Holbrook, Business Manager for the Alpine School District in American Fork, UT, for his creation of a useful Excel spreadsheet to assist school districts in preparing financial statements under GASB 34.

GASB 34 is a new standard format for audited financial statements and it applies to some districts in FY03 and all Montana school districts effective for audits of FY04.

Montana Clerks/Business Managers might find that with some adjustments, this could be a useful tool. Here is a website which will lead to a GASB 34 template for school districts.

<http://asbointl.org/committeedirectory/details.asp?i=7>

If you have questions about GASB 34, please contact Denise Ulberg at 444-0783 or dulberg@state.mt.us.

Are You Receiving OPI "Official Email"?

OPI now sends "Official Email" to districts and county superintendents rather than sending mass mailings. We email messages to unique METNET mailboxes for each school district and county.

OPI can set the email to forward a copy to any email address you use. If you prefer, you can view a complete list of OPI "Official Email" messages at:

http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail.

Anyone with Internet access can read the messages. Set the address as a "favorite" on your Internet browser for fast, easy access.

Need help? Contact Nica Carte at (406) 444-4401 or ncarte@state.mt.us.

Plan NOW!

2nd Semester Bus Inspections

For December 2003 and January 2004

Inspections must be passed by Jan. 31, 2004, to receive full funding for second semester.

A-133 "Federal" Audit Reminder



A-133 audits for FY03 are to be completed and reported to the Department of Administration and the OPI by March 31, 2004. If you don't

have your audit contract completed, please get it in soon. Remember: "Whenever bidding is required, the contract must be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder, except that all bids may be rejected." (20-9-205(5), MCA)

For more information about audits, contact Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

School Finance Forms and Publications on Internet

Need an attendance agreement/tuition form? Transportation forms? Elections calendar? General information about school budgeting and accounting? See the School Finance area of the OPI website for forms and publications at:

[http://
www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/forms.html](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/forms.html)

Let us know if you are looking for a particular form, and we'll do our best to provide it electronically!

Coding Medicaid Payments

Deposit Medicaid receipts in Miscellaneous Programs Fund 15 under a separate project reporter code. Code receipts for regular School Based Services (SBS) using revenue sources 3351-3355. This payment will be reimbursements for services such as physical therapy, speech therapy, etc. Code receipts for the new Comprehensive School and Community Treatment Services program (CSCT) using revenue source 3356. Code expenditures using expenditure program 100 regular education services or 280

special education services. School districts do not have to maintain effort on Medicaid funds. Call Jim Oberembt at 444-1257 or email him at joberembt@state.mt.us if you have any questions.

Fill-In Forms Provided by MASBO

Several fill-in forms (TR-1, TR-4, grant cash request forms) are available on the MASBO website at <http://www.masbo.com>. Special thanks to MASBO's Roger Heimbegner, who developed the forms!



Useful Websites

List of all Official OPI E-Mails:

http://www.metnet.state.mt.us/Official_Mail

OPI's GASB 34 Web Page:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/gasb34.html>.

OPI's "Get Answers" searchable databases:

http://data.opi.state.mt.us/scripts/rightnow.cfg/php.exe/enduser/std_alp.php

Bus Safety and Driver Training Videos:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/pupiltransport/TrainingVideos.pdf>

School Finance forms and publications:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/forms.html>

FP-14 Student Attendance Agreement

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/FP14.pdf>

FP-14A Special Tuition Rates (used with FP-14)

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/Tuition/SpecTuitRates.pdf>

2004 Elections Calendar:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/2004ElectionCal.pdf> . Need more informa-

tion about elections? Contact Mike Waterman at (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

CFDA Numbers for Federal Grants: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/FederalPrograms/handbook.html> (Appendix F of the OPI State and Federal Grants Handbook)

Budget Amendment

Packet: OPI offers a packet of information about the budget amendment process for school districts: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/2002bapacket.pdf>

If your enrollment increased more than 6% over the average enrollment in SY 2002-03, your district may be eligible for additional state funding.

Montana Codes Annotated (MCA) Online:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/masterMCASearch.htm>

In case you missed it.....

The 2003 Montana School Law Books have arrived!!

OPI is now shipping to schools who have pre-ordered. Books can be purchased for \$10 by filling out the order form located at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/legaldivision/schoollaworderform.pdf>

Coming next month.....

OPI is currently updating the School Accounting Manual and plans to post it electronically in December.

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